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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DR. LOUIS GRADO PLANS RETIREMENT

CHARLESTON, IL.--No two years have been alike for Dr. Louis Grado, Eastern Illinois University Professor and Chairperson of Elementary and Junior High Education, who will soon end what he describes as a "close relationship" with Eastern.

After 34 years on the Eastern faculty, Grado plans to take six months administrative leave before officially retiring in August.

Grado, who has played a significant role in recruiting faculty, developing programming and preparing students for careers in teacher education, has seen steady growth in the number of students enrolled in teacher education, as well as the number of teacher education faculty.

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"When I came to Eastern in 1955, there was a total enrollment of about 1,700. Now there are over 1,000 students enrolled in elementary and junior high education alone. There have also been three to four new faculty employed every year since I have been here," Grado said.

State mandates have had a significant effect on the preparation of teachers, said Grado, adding that teacher education majors must now take a competency exam upon graduation. "Both state and national accrediting agencies are also putting more emphasis on the clinical aspects of teacher education programs," he said.

The supply and demand for teachers has also changed dramatically over the years, Grado said. "There have been periods of extreme teacher shortages and times when individuals really needed to work hard at finding a job.

"There is an indication now that in the next two to three years there will again be a shortage of Illinois teachers. This is already true in junior high education," he said.

Grado believes there needs to be increased community support for education, especially in establishing better teacher salaries. "We are not going to have quality teachers going into the field unless they can expect to receive competitive salaries. If salaries increase, I would expect the number of men entering elementary education to increase. In an education class of 30 students at Eastern at present, there may be one male."

Grado's work in teacher education has not only had an impact on Eastern students, but also on many from abroad. As a teacher education advisor for the U.S. State Department, Grado spent two years in Nicaragua reorganizing the country's teacher education programs.

As a result of his work, Grado developed a common general education plan for all of Nicaragua's secondary and normal schools. He increased the number of people in teacher education by four times, reduced the cost of preparing teachers by one-half, and developed and introduced reading materials for first and second graders throughout the country.

While at Eastern, Grado helped develop three of four options in special education and organized the first reading conference, which has become an annual event for about 1,000 educators.

He guided the establishment of the Area Council of the International Reading Association, an organization that promotes reading in public schools.

Although Grado has been involved in many state and national organizations and committees, he takes particular pride in his involvement with the work of the Illinois State Board of Education in programs in bilingual and migrant education.

"My experience at Eastern has been most satisfying. I have had many opportunities for program development made possible through the support of the administration and faculty. I have also enjoyed my association with the public schools," Grado said.

Eastern continues to be recognized as one of the top schools in the country for teacher education and continues to attract a growing number of enrollees. "I am very proud to have had the chance to see Eastern's quality teacher education program maintain its excellence and to have been a part of our graduates' successes in the field," he said.

Two Eastern alumni, Ruth Hawkins and Peggy Allan, were named Illinois Teachers of the Year in 1973 and 1988, respectively.

Although Grado plans to travel, visit his five children of whom four are Eastern alumni, spend time on his farm in Southern Illinois, and do volunteer work, he won't completely sever his ties with Eastern as he may continue to teach on a part-time basis.